

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

Notice is hereby given that a Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Austin will be held on the 12th day of September, 1955, at the Municipal Building, Eighth and Colorado, in Austin, Texas, at 2:30 P.M. for the purpose of discussing safety measures on Lake Austin with the Navigation Board, Police Officials, and interested parties.

(Sgd) Elsie Woosley
City Clerk

(Sgd) Tom Miller
Mayor
City of Austin, Texas

ATTEST:

(Sgd) Elsie Woosley
City Clerk

CONSENT TO MEETING

We, the undersigned members of the City Council, hereby accept service of the foregoing notice, waiving any and all irregularities in such service and such notice, and consent and agree that said City Council shall meet at the time and place therein named, and for the purpose therein stated.

(Sgd) Wesley Pearson

(Sgd) Ben White

(Sgd) Emma J. Long

(Sgd) Lester E. Palmer

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Special Meeting

September 12, 1955
2:30 P.M.

Council Chamber, City Hall

The meeting was called to order with Mayor Miller presiding.

Roll call:

Present: Councilmen Long, Palmer, Pearson, White, Mayor Miller
Absent: None

Present also: W. T. Williams, Jr., City Manager; Doren Eskew, City Attorney; Police Officials

Present also: Members of the Navigation Board, Mr. Forest Pearson, Mr. R. G. Mueller, Jr., Mr. Marion Fowler, and Mr. A. N. McCallum, Jr.

The Mayor announced that this meeting was called for the purpose of considering safety measures on Lake Austin with the Navigation Board, Police Officials, and interested parties.

The following suggestions were submitted:

MRS. V. A. GRANT suggested that children under a certain age limit not be allowed on the lake by themselves unless they have written consent of the parents, and providing a way of keeping children off the lake unless their parents know about it.

MR. PERKINS added along with the permit that there should be life preservers in each boat, and that this be enforced. He urged that the commercial operators be made to provide life preservers.

MR. GEORGE MOFFATT wanted the responsibility placed on the commercial boat operators. Later on in the meeting he stated that the private boat owners had discussed the possibility of patrolling the lake and cutting it into four zones of five miles in area. It would be possible for the individual boat owners to patrol these zones say for four hours, over week-ends and on holidays. This would be not to enforce laws, but as a safety patrol; and they would work under the American Red Cross

Safety Patrol--not as a deputy of the City. The boats would fly the Red Cross Emblem and would serve to advise boaters and people on the lake and caution them if necessary. He believed there were enough boaters that this could be organized. Mrs. Lundell, American Red Cross stated the Red Cross would be sure that they were well trained and up-to-date. Councilman Long inquired if they would work with the Police Department, so it would know how many were on duty.

MRS. LUNDELL, American Red Cross, stated they were interested in education in water safety.

MRS. F. C. MASELES suggested that if the cards were issued to children that some sort of test be given to determine if a child were capable of taking care of himself:

MRS. LUNDELL stated the Skiers Club had suggested that their members take the Red Cross Senior Life Saving Course and that would be just that many more people qualified. The Junior Life Saving Course is available to children.

MR. WALLY SCOTT believed the parents should take full responsibility of their children's being on the lake, and asked that no further restrictions be placed on boats, urging education rather than restrictions and regulations.

MRS. GEORGE MOFFATT suggested that a weed-cutter that would cut deeper than just the tops be placed on the lake and cut the weeds down.

MR. JOE HOOTEN, boat owner on the lake, endorsed Mr. Scott's suggestion, stating the Skiing Club planned all along educational features--films, etc., regarding water safety. He suggested traffic patterns for boats, as on highways, and suggested enforcement of these patterns.

MR. RAYMOND BROWN called attention to the fact that a boat moving slowly draws more draft than speeding boat, and there was not as much hazard from a speed boat as people thought, concerning the wake it draws.

MR. FOREST PEARSON, Navigation Board, stated the Council passed a new license ordinance which made a small charge for the licensing of boats, and to give an opportunity of bringing to the owners' attention the need of adequate equipment and safety precautions. As far as routing operation was concerned, there were no accidents of any consequence since the passage of this ordinance. The Board had a pamphlet compiled called "SAFE BOATING ON LAKE AUSTIN", and read some of the provisions as listed in the pamphlet. He stated the lake was pretty well regulated. He pointed out the patrol equipment was antiquated, having been on the lake 15 years, and having been placed there when the activities were 500% less than are now. The Police Department staff had not been increased, but had done a good job with what they had to do with. His suggestion was that there be more effective interpretation and enforcement of the rules now set up, rather than further restrictions.

Mr. George Moffatt, in line with his recommendation of the Safety Patrol, had formerly asked if the City would consider furnishing gas and oil for the voluntary patrolmen while on duty.

CHIEF THORP stated the Voluntary Patrol would be a fine thing, and he believed having the backing of the Red Cross and the trained people in the boats would be very good; and that these gentlemen wanted to work with the Council, with the Police, City Manager, and give their time, and it would be appreciated.

MR. MARION FOWLER, member of the Board, believed the main trouble on the lake was lack of safety education, and the next source of trouble was the violations. Besides suggesting a program of education, he thought if there were a patrolman stationed around the park where he could be reached and then the 1% of violators apprehended and the balance educated, there would be quite an improvement.

A particular suggestion with reference to safety, was to have the police officers qualified as life guards, and have their police boats equipped with life-saving equipment and markers.

Mayor Miller explained that no one had a vested right in the lake; that it belongs to all the people; that the lake was built for the conservation of water, but the City had maintained the right for the recreational uses. He saw no harm in having the permits or cards for the children who were to rent these boats. Councilman Long moved that the City Manager be instructed to work out a plan to accept the offer of the voluntary Safety Patrol, and that an ordinance be brought in requiring children under 15 to get a permit from the Police Department, and to be accompanied by their parents when applying for this permit, before they can rent boats or canoes; and that the possibility of furnishing gas and oil to the voluntary Safety Patrol be studied. The motion, seconded by Councilman White, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Long, Palmer, Pearson, White, Mayor Miller
Noes: None

It was discussed to have the boat owner responsible and that he could not rent the boats unless he saw the card from all the children.

Another suggestion from the Y.M.C.A. was that safety regulations be printed on this card.

MAJOR QUINN, Gary Air Force, offered the facilities of the base in emergencies and disasters. He did not believe the patrol by the machines would be desirable; and in a drowning, the time limit in getting a helicopter from the base to the scene would be of no avail.

MAYOR MILLER wanted the Navigation Board to study the area around the dam and extend this further away, and keep boats further from the dam, as this area was very dangerous.

MR. MOFFATT asked that provision be made for all docks extending out in the water to be lighted.

There being no further business the Council adjourned at 4:10 P.M.
subject to the call of the Mayor.

APPROVED

Mayor

ATTEST:

Chris Hoosley
City Clerk